

MONSTER!

ISSUE # 74 \$1.00

SPECIAL

INTERNATIONAL

VAMPIRE

ISSUE



IN THIS ISSUE: BLOOD-SUCKING GONE WILD!

**Sergio Corbucci's GOLIATH AND THE VAMPIRES,
A TRIPLE DOSE OF HONG KONG VAMPIRE ACTION,
Ted Nicolaou's SUBSPECIES, I BOUGHT A VAMPIRE
MOTORCYCLE, HAMBURGER HORRORS, and more!!**



MONSTER! Volume 4 Number 2 Issue 74 is published monthly by KRONOS PRODUCTIONS, MPO Box 57, Oberlin, Ohio 44074 0057, USA. Editor/lay-out/head writer: Timothy Paxton. MONSTER! MASCOT: Dave Todarello. Subscriptions: one year = 12 issues for \$12. Canada please add \$3. Overseas please add \$7. MONSTER! only reviews MONSTER films, none of that slasher stuff. SPECIAL FIVERS: Ken Schneider, Betsy Burger, Eric Sulev, Steve Bessano, Craig Ledbetter, Horacio Higuchi, Steve Fontane, Mike Vranco, Lyndal Ferguson, Michael Ferguson, Dennis Capricci, Jason Gray, Michael Weldon, Tim Livers, Frank Hennigler & Peter, Steve Bissette, Video Search of Miami, Jeff Sagal, John Vellutini, Tony Leo, Grandma Graphics, Dad Dynamics, Dave Seibert, and fanzine editors worldwide. COVER THIS ISSUE: Lyndal Ferguson's VAMPIRES. BACK COVER: Poster art for I BOUGHT A VAMPIRE MOTORCYCLE (see page 15.)

MONSTER! Volume 4 Number 2 is published monthly by KRONOS PRODUCTIONS, MPO Box 57, Oberlin, Ohio 44074 0057, USA. Editor/lay-out/head writer: Timothy Paxton. MONSTER! MASCOT: Dave Todarello. Subscriptions: one year = 12 issues for \$12. Canada please add \$3. Overseas please add \$7. MONSTER! only reviews MONSTER films, none of that slasher stuff. SPECIAL FIVERS: Ken Schneider, Betsy Burger, Eric Sulev, Steve Bessano, Craig Ledbetter, Horacio Higuchi, Steve Fontane, Mike Vranco, Lyndal Ferguson, Michael Ferguson, Dennis Capricci, Jason Gray, Michael Weldon, Tim Livers, Frank Hennigler & Peter, Steve Bissette, Video Search of Miami, Jeff Sagal, John Vellutini, Tony Leo, Grandma Graphics, Dad Dynamics, Dave Seibert, and fanzine editors worldwide.

MONSTER! Volume 4 Number 2 is published monthly by KRONOS PRODUCTIONS, MPO Box 57, Oberlin, Ohio 44074 0057, USA. Editor/lay-out/head writer: Timothy Paxton. MONSTER! MASCOT: Dave Todarello. Subscriptions: one year = 12 issues for \$12. Canada please add \$3. Overseas please add \$7. MONSTER! only reviews MONSTER films, none of that slasher stuff. SPECIAL FIVERS: Ken Schneider, Betsy Burger, Eric Sulev, Steve Bessano, Craig Ledbetter, Horacio Higuchi, Steve Fontane, Mike Vranco, Lyndal Ferguson, Michael Ferguson, Dennis Capricci, Jason Gray, Michael Weldon, Tim Livers, Frank Hennigler & Peter, Steve Bissette, Video Search of Miami, Jeff Sagal, John Vellutini, Tony Leo, Grandma Graphics, Dad Dynamics, Dave Seibert, and fanzine editors worldwide.

MONSTER! Volume 4 Number 2 is published monthly by KRONOS PRODUCTIONS, MPO Box 57, Oberlin, Ohio 44074 0057, USA. Editor/lay-out/head writer: Timothy Paxton. MONSTER! MASCOT: Dave Todarello. Subscriptions: one year = 12 issues for \$12. Canada please add \$3. Overseas please add \$7. MONSTER! only reviews MONSTER films, none of that slasher stuff. SPECIAL FIVERS: Ken Schneider, Betsy Burger, Eric Sulev, Steve Bessano, Craig Ledbetter, Horacio Higuchi, Steve Fontane, Mike Vranco, Lyndal Ferguson, Michael Ferguson, Dennis Capricci, Jason Gray, Michael Weldon, Tim Livers, Frank Hennigler & Peter, Steve Bissette, Video Search of Miami, Jeff Sagal, John Vellutini, Tony Leo, Grandma Graphics, Dad Dynamics, Dave Seibert, and fanzine editors worldwide.

MONSTER! Volume 4 Number 2 is published monthly by KRONOS PRODUCTIONS, MPO Box 57, Oberlin, Ohio 44074 0057, USA. Editor/lay-out/head writer: Timothy Paxton. MONSTER! MASCOT: Dave Todarello. Subscriptions: one year = 12 issues for \$12. Canada please add \$3. Overseas please add \$7. MONSTER! only reviews MONSTER films, none of that slasher stuff. SPECIAL FIVERS: Ken Schneider, Betsy Burger, Eric Sulev, Steve Bessano, Craig Ledbetter, Horacio Higuchi, Steve Fontane, Mike Vranco, Lyndal Ferguson, Michael Ferguson, Dennis Capricci, Jason Gray, Michael Weldon, Tim Livers, Frank Hennigler & Peter, Steve Bissette, Video Search of Miami, Jeff Sagal, John Vellutini, Tony Leo, Grandma Graphics, Dad Dynamics, Dave Seibert, and fanzine editors worldwide.

AUTHORS BOX

MONSTER! Volume 4 Number 2 is published monthly by KRONOS PRODUCTIONS, MPO Box 57, Oberlin, Ohio 44074 0057, USA. Editor/lay-out/head writer: Timothy Paxton. MONSTER! MASCOT: Dave Todarello. Subscriptions: one year = 12 issues for \$12. Canada please add \$3. Overseas please add \$7. MONSTER! only reviews MONSTER films, none of that slasher stuff. SPECIAL FIVERS: Ken Schneider, Betsy Burger, Eric Sulev, Steve Bessano, Craig Ledbetter, Horacio Higuchi, Steve Fontane, Mike Vranco, Lyndal Ferguson, Michael Ferguson, Dennis Capricci, Jason Gray, Michael Weldon, Tim Livers, Frank Hennigler & Peter, Steve Bissette, Video Search of Miami, Jeff Sagal, John Vellutini, Tony Leo, Grandma Graphics, Dad Dynamics, Dave Seibert, and fanzine editors worldwide.

DAVID THE CLAY: The author and layout designer that only took 80¢ a sheet of paper and made it into a classic. Editor in his opinion: MONSTER! and owner of all of Timothy's life and happiness. He has been kind enough to read MONSTER! for his headbanger list. Thanks, David.

JOHN THE CLAY: The author and layout designer that only took 80¢ a sheet of paper and made it into a classic. Editor in his opinion: MONSTER! and owner of all of Timothy's life and happiness. He has been kind enough to read MONSTER! for his headbanger list. Thanks, John.

JOHN THE CLAY: The author and layout designer that only took 80¢ a sheet of paper and made it into a classic. Editor in his opinion: MONSTER! and owner of all of Timothy's life and happiness. He has been kind enough to read MONSTER! for his headbanger list. Thanks, John.

DAVID THE CLAY: The author and layout designer that only took 80¢ a sheet of paper and made it into a classic. Editor in his opinion: MONSTER! and owner of all of Timothy's life and happiness. He has been kind enough to read MONSTER! for his headbanger list. Thanks, David.

JOHN THE CLAY: The author and layout designer that only took 80¢ a sheet of paper and made it into a classic. Editor in his opinion: MONSTER! and owner of all of Timothy's life and happiness. He has been kind enough to read MONSTER! for his headbanger list. Thanks, John.

JOHN THE CLAY: The author and layout designer that only took 80¢ a sheet of paper and made it into a classic. Editor in his opinion: MONSTER! and owner of all of Timothy's life and happiness. He has been kind enough to read MONSTER! for his headbanger list. Thanks, John.

MONSTER! Volume 4 Number 2 Issue 74 is published monthly by KRONOS PRODUCTIONS, MPO Box 57, Oberlin, Ohio 44074 0057, USA.

Editor/lay-out/head writer: Timothy Paxton.

MONSTER! MASCOT: Dave Todarello.

Subscriptions: one year = 12 issues for \$12. Canada please add \$3. Overseas please add \$7.

MONSTER! only reviews MONSTER films, none of that slasher stuff.

SPECIAL FIVERS: Ken Schneider, Betsy Burger, Eric Sulev, Steve Bessano, Craig Ledbetter, Horacio Higuchi, Steve Fontane, Mike Vranco, Lyndal Ferguson, Michael Ferguson, Dennis Capricci, Jason Gray, Michael Weldon, Tim Livers, Frank Hennigler & Peter, Steve Bissette, Video Search of Miami, Jeff Sagal, John Vellutini, Tony Leo, Grandma Graphics, Dad Dynamics, Dave Seibert, and fanzine editors worldwide.

COVER THIS ISSUE: Lyndal Ferguson's VAMPIRES

BACK COVER: Poster art for I BOUGHT A VAMPIRE MOTORCYCLE (see page 15.)



BISSETT'S HAMBURGER MONSTER and HORROR MOVIES

THE LOST WHIRL 1926?

Possibly the source for the dinosaur footage used in the early 1950's Tootsie Roll commercials that appeared to be lifted from Willis O'Brien's **THE LOST WORLD**, but the crudility of the models and animation indicated otherwise. **THE LOST WHIRL** was, as its title indicates, a parody of O'Brien's seminal silent classic, and featured its own animated model dinosaurs...but whether it's a feature or a short, I haven't any idea.

Other elusive silent dinosaur flicks I'm searching for: **THE SAVAGE** (1926) Chaplin's **HIS PREHISTORIC PAST** (very dino?)...nevertheless, I need to see it at some time), **EVOLUTION**, **MYSTERY OF LIFE** (both of which may be sound), and a number of the O'Brien shorts I'm missing (I do have a few of them). I also am searching for O.W. Griffith's **MAN'S GENESIS** (1912) and **BRUTE FORCE** (1914) and Laurel & Hardy's **FLYING ELEPHANTS** (1927), all of which I once had on 8mm from Blackhawk but lost years ago.

With the help of Ray Harryhausen, activist Scott Queen is about to release on laserdisc a partially-restored print of **THE LOST WORLD** (which has not been seen complete in over fifty years). The recent Laser Disc release of **KING KONG** resurrected O'Brien's brilliant, long-unseen **CREATION** test footage; could it be we'll one day see the **KONG** spider-pit sequence, or the **WAR EAGLES** Vikings & eagles vs. alligator animation tests? Perhaps some of the "lost" O'Brien and Pat Paterson animation for projects they were unable to sell in the 1950's?

Oh, hey, how about seeing the complete Walrus sequence from Toho's **GORATH**? Or the missing piranha sequence from **CANNIBAL HOLOCAUST**? Or Cameron's original ending, tidal wave and all, for the **ABYSS**?

If wishes were hamburgers...we wouldn't write selfish non-articles like these.

SECRET OF THE LOCH British, 1934; some sources report 1932

Early British horror film are rare items, and usually notable for their pedestrian timidity (with the sole exception of Karloff vehicle **THE GOUL**) and weirdly repressive atmospheres. This oddity is a genuine monster movie, and not, as one might properly suppose, a cheat in which the Loch Ness Monster ends up being some sort of man-made fabrication. Walt Lee says it's about the "hatching of [a] prehistoric egg [hatching a] monster into Scottish loch, discovered by diver" (Reference Guide to Fantasy Film, Volume 3, 1974, pg. 428).

This alone has always whet my appetite: the first British dinosaur movie, perhaps, forerunner to **THE GIANT BEHE-**

MOTH and immortal **GORG0**? My interest was fanned into passion when a recent reading of Ken Russell: An Autobiography (1980) mentioned the renowned director's memories of **THE SECRET OF THE LOCH**, the first horror film he'd ever seen, and a "low budget British film of the worst kind." Russell remembers the film as a laughable bore until the film's climax:

"...it wasn't until the last reel that we finally got to see what was going on beneath the surface. The model of the diver they used was even worse than the ones the blow bubbles around my wittle in the bath on Friday nights, and the grotto he was heading for looked like a cracked, upturned flowerpot on the bottom of a fish tank. But what of the monster? I knew the monster was going to appear from behind the flowerpot directly the toy diver bounced inside. I prepared to laugh...I'd seen a smudgy picture of 'Nessie' in a newspaper and was expecting a model dinosaur. What actually appeared scared me stiff. It was a naked chicken, plucked and very much alive. Every hair on my head rose in horror, and I fled from the cinema..."

I don't remember being so scared in the cinema ever again and that includes...[the climax of] Clouzot's **LES DIABOLIQUES**. That was nothing compared to the naked chicken, with beady eyes and sharp beak, pecking its way with clawed feet over the stones towards the unsuspecting diver in the upturned flowerpot. Bear that, Steven Spielberg!" (Russell, pp. 6-7)

...and more over, **GIANT CLAW**. J. Elder Wells is credited with the special effects, which sound special indeed. This I've got to see one day!

Some sources give **SECRET OF THE LOCH** as an alternative title to a 1951 British film entitled **THE LOCH NESS MONSTER**...I dunno, I just want to see exactly what Ken Russell saw.

PORT SINISTER 1953

This trashy little programmer used to pop on TV occasionally when I was a kid, and even though I could see how cheap it was at a tender age, it was still a favorite.

I vaguely recalled it being about treasure seekers discovering a sunken island that mysteriously surfaces. Among the menaces are giant crabs and a treacherous crossing of crustal-over-lava fields. One wrong step, a and you'd break through the crust and die horribly; this inspired great childhood reenactment

in the winter when the freezing rain had crusted over the snow to the corned thickness.

"Yah! I've broken through ... THE LAVAH! NOI NOI Oooooo!"

Directed by Harold Daniels, who later crafted the notorious **BAYOU aka POOR WHITE TRASH** (1987).

TROG

1970, D: Freddie Francis

THE MIGHTY GORGA

1967?, D: David Hewitt

Trogolotype fantasies are high on my most-wanted-etc list. I saw a truncated version of **TROG** on the CBS Late Night Movie back in the early 70's, shown of the gore shots (the butcher hung up on his meat hook, etc.) visible in monster zones that publicized its release. I love this kind of moron monster stuff, and I know my son Danny (age 8) would get into it now.

THE MIGHTY GORGA sounds appealing because, by all accounts, it's exactly what I used to do with my 8mm camera and my plastic dinosaurs. Perverse nostalgia, if you will. I've lumped these two together ... though I'd probably save **TROG** for last. Too much of a good thing can hurt you, after all ...

JOURNEY TO THE BEGINNING OF TIME

1955, US release 1965

SINBAD

1967? Both directed by Karl Zeman

Zeman is one of fantasy's most engaging stylists, and all of his work is long overdue a proper outlet in the video market. Childhood Productions released **JOURNEY TO THE BEGINNING OF TIME** (not to be confused with David Hewitt's rapid **TIME TRAVELERS** remake, **JOURNEY TO THE CENTER OF TIME**, 1967) as a matinee feature, and I have fond memories of seeing it on the big screen during its fleeting New England circuit. It's basically a Czech Huckleberry Finn and friends railing up Edgar Rice Burroughs' *Land That Time Forgot* over that ascends the evolutionary ladder of life on planet Earth. Childhood Productions framed the Zeman original by having the kids mysteriously depart from, and return to, New York City's Central Park.

The combination of live action models and stop-motion animation looked crude by mid-60's Ray Harryhausen standards, but as always Zeman's beguiling energy and charm lent it a unique appeal. The poster was cool, too, incorporating nicely-rendered swipes from Barnum & Bailey circus posters (with its saber-tooth tiger leaping out at you) and Charles Knight's classic dinosaur painting.

Zeman's **SINBAD** is something I've never seen, and would die for. It is apparently a collection of short Sinbad features Zeman did the late 60's, and is on video in English. I'm still kicking myself in the head over this one: a Bennington, Vermont mom & pop store that rents racked videos actually had this one tape — and wouldn't let me rent it at the time (I wasn't a member,

and didn't have the money at the time to join ... remember \$25-50 membership fees?). A week or so later, I went back and joined — and Zeman's **SINBAD** was gone. They were unable to get it back because they had shifted to a new video supplier, and I've never seen it since anywhere. The video title might have been **SINBAD**, or **THE ADVENTURES OF SINBAD**, or **SINBAD'S UMPTIEN VOYAGES**, or **SinObad**, or I don't know what the fuck — and I haven't a clue whether it was a US or Canadian video release, since we get a lot of oddball Canada videos here in Vermont.

CAN ANY MONSTER! READER HELP ME ON THIS? I'd trade an original Bessette monster sketch for a copy of this Zeman **SINBAD** tape!

OTHER FLICKS I'D LOVE TO SEE:

Edison's **FRANKENSTEIN** (which someone was showing last year at the Nashville World Horror Convention — I hope to catch up with it this year!), and the French weird **TORTICOLA**; **STATIC** and **ARCHANGEL**, which I'll get to; underground horror titles like **EVEN AS YOU AND I** and Andy Warhol's **BATMAN DRACULA** (with Jack Smith in the title role) and **VINYL** (his version of **A CLOCKWORK ORANGE**, years before Kubrick's feature); Abel Gance's silent **J'ACCUSE**; **THEY WALK BY NIGHT** with Ernest Thesiger; Alejandro Jodorowsky's **FANDO AND LIS** — apparently a lost film now, even its cut US form — and Sergio Leone's **THE COLOSSUS OF RHODES**; George Franju's **LA TÊTE CONTRE LE MURS** (which I did get to see a few times on French Canadian television back in the late 60's); Gianni's **PSYCHOSISSIMO** (1962), which is either an early giallo prototype or a crappy Italian horror-comedy, or both, predating Bauer's **THE EVIL EYE** by a year or three; Curtis Hamington's **WHAT'S THE MATTER WITH HELEN?** (1971), which was a drive-in favorite of mine; the super-rare Hammer child-molester expose **NEVER TAKE SWEETS FROM A STRANGER**; Russ Meyer's **BLACK SNAKE** aka **SLAYERS**; **BLACK BELLY OF THE TARANTULA**; Larry Cohen's **BONE** aka **DIAL R.A.T. FOR TERROR**, reportedly on US video as a comedy under the title **HOUSEWIFE**; Cornel Wilde's uncute epic **NO BLADE OF GRASS**, along with uncute prints of **POSSESSION** of Joel Delaney, **THE HOUSE THAT SCREAMED** (what a great Spanish horror flick this is, even cut), **THE TODD KILLINGS**, **TOYS ARE NOT FOR CHILDREN**, **SOLDIER BLUE** (which, even on 16 mm prints, has as climax shown to bits), and Peckinpah's **CROSS OF IRON**; and, hey, how about Cushing backing-the-vee-in **FRANKENSTEIN AND THE MONSTER FROM HELL?**



VAMPIRE TALES

Hopping corpses, Blond Aryan bloodsuckers, bald, spider-legged fingered, rat-teethed creepies; mechanical blood-suckers; what have you — this is the world of alternative vampires. Here are seven variants of the vampire theme ... all possess different twists on the traditional, and all are oddball as well.

DOCTOR VAMPIRE

Original title: JIANGSHI YISHENG

1991, D: Lu Jianming

Silly. Inane. Smiler. Despite the video's lack of subtitles, all of these varied descriptions are spot-on definitions for **DOCTOR VAMPIRE**. More specifically, here is a film where the myths of East meet West, and the confrontation which develops between the two. In this Hong Kong production our wayward Chinese hero is confronted with two evils, both perversions of the norm. Firstly, there is the ever current menace of a female vampire who loves the fool human and keeps a wary eye out for him. Second, and more profound, there is the Aryan vampire boss who wants to drain the very same nincompoop of his specially delicious variant of blood. Wedged between these two aggressions our protagonist barely has enough room to negotiate his jealous girlfriend and various members of his personal and professional clique. Sounds like another annoying Chinese vampire film doesn't it? In many ways it is, however there are sporadic instances of delectating absurdity that elevates the production out of the mire of mundane monster movies. Nevertheless even though English subtitles are absent (although there is a subtitled version around I haven't run across it yet, and I didn't feel like waiting to get it before doing this review — so you can spot me on any misinformation if you like), there is no loss of entertainment value.

The film opens and our peppy hero, a young Hong Kong surgeon named Dr. Au, is vacationing in England, motoring down a serene country road when his car breaks down. Cursing his luck (and I didn't need subtitles understand that), Au heads off down the way in search of a phone he can use to call a garage. After a short walk he happens upon a well-kept English mansion. As he strolls up to the building, this sound of rock and roll partying is heard from within... The door pops open and a woman in festive garb ushers our confused foreigner inside. "Welcome to paradise," she chirps in English, "come on in!" Au is given a brief tour of the place, ending up in a packed bar where a busty white female bartender gives him a drink. Au takes a Coke and tries to make his way to a bathroom or a phone, or somewhere where he can get away from the pawing white females which are constantly intimidating him. In the

process of stepping over people, refining bodies of intertwined couples (of which the males are growling and screaming — but not with pleasure!) our socially uncomfortable surgeon struts his way down some back stairs. Thinking he's escaped the gals' crowd, he interrupts an over-the-hill couple. This time it seems that an overweight white businessman is assaulting a luscious Chinese girl — or is she assaulting him? Anyway, even though the man is crying for help, Au comes to the aid of his country woman. Curdoot beats the man with his suitcase and drives the film away from the girl...not taking notice that the woman hisses and possesses some serious fangs! Luckily for our hero, the woman, Alice by name, doesn't attack him just then. She makes her acquaintance then leads him back up the stairs, and, by secret non-verbal orders from a large blond man, beds the surgeon. It's wonderful sex, and during foreplay she flashes her fangs and bites him. In the morning Au discovers that his lover is gone and he leaves the impressive stone caskets for his home country.

Meanwhile, back in England, the blond vampire bossman is supping. His vampire brides take turn tolerating their master munching away at their exposed palms. However, the latest batch of English-based blood disappoints the vampire King. After one woman offers her nightly collection, he tosses her aside and growls for more. "Go on, it's your turn, Jocelyn," orders the big vampire bitch that runs the bar. A Black vamp twiggles up to her master and he chews on their wrist. "Why!", he roars. "Why do you have to bring me the drugs?" and slaps her to the ground. She whimpers, "Sorry, master" and scampers back to the retailer where the rest of the lady bloodsuckers are lounge-about. "Alice, you're next," snarls the blond bitch. "Hurry up!" Alice sheepishly gets off her bar stool and enters the potentate's room to offer her bowl of freshly collected blood. Our Aryan vampire bites into her palm, hesitates, then greedily sucks and sucks. Disengaging from her story bag enough to smack his lips he cries, "Yum! Where's that man?" he inquires meaning Au. "Bring him to me at once!" "He's gone," Alice informs her master. "What? You let him go?" "Do you know how long since I've tasted such delicious blood," he licks his lips with glee, "I don't care what you do — bring him back to me!" Now here's are the best lines from the film: "Don't you understand? His blood is like your Chinese ginseng. He drives me crazy! He makes me high!" he whirls and grabs Alice, "You bring that ginseng back to me!" Sadly, Alice acknowledges her monarch's request and leaves the room to begin her long travel to lead Au for him.

DRACULA SUMMER BAT

Enough to scare Francis himself. This vampire has come with a machine gun that when stuck on the wall or laid on the bed, will cause nothing but grief to the poor victim who walks in unconsciously. Full power only like real. Grade B+, A



Back in Hong Kong, Au rejoins his fellow surgeons just in time for a delicate operation on a police sergeant's penis (a good many of the jokes in this film has to do with donges). We are introduced as well to his girlfriend and nurse Ami Chen, along with her roommate and headnurse. In a series of misadventures Au learns that her boyfriend has had an affair with a vampire (she finds blood-spattered undergarments while doing his laundry from the trip). Au gets weirder and weirder as he slowly begins a painful transformation into one of the living dead. He dresses in a Lugosi cape, sports fancy sunglasses, refuses to eat cooked food, and has unhealthy urges to bite people. What can be done?

Alice shows up and even though she attempt to go through with her kidnapping of Au, realizes that she actually loves the man. Then and there she decides to actually help the idiot instead of turning the man over to her blood-thirsty master — not the best course of action as the blond giant is desperate to get another

slip of this "chinese ginseng" blood. After numerous failed attempts to cure Au (including a blood/soul transplant with a recently deceased man — which backfires and turns the corpse into a horny vampire sporting a huge hard-on!!), and his buddies trying to help the situation by buying him a Quing Dynasty hopping-vampire outfit, things get serious when the master vampire and his blond bitch show up to reclaim Alice and get Au. In a hilarious showdown its up to Budha to save the day (as it seems to happen in a lot of these films). The western monster makes a serious mistake of repeatedly kicking a small Budha statuette. After the third insult, the god is pissed off and transforms Au and his two buddies into mythological chinese demi-gods which are able to destroy the surprised foreigner. As the ashes settle from the resulting explosion, our huddled heroes wipe their brows.

Clearly well produced, with competent acting and exciting visuals, DOCTOR VAMPIRE is moreorless like an ambitious GENERAL HOSPITAL meets FRIGHT NIGHT. The film is funny and lightening. Regardless of the fact that there is no rudely to speak of, the gore (and there is a lot of blood) is unusual and plentiful. There's a painful scene where the female western vampire upon finding Alice, Au, Ami and a bogus Taoist in an operating room, gets her breasts skewered with a holy sword. OUCH! Then there are the usual gallons of blood whenever a vampire is stuck with a stake, shot with a laser, or burnt with sunlight. Not a sophisticated film that much is for sure, but it will keep you entertained for at least the majority of its 90-minute odd running time.



SEEKING SOMETHING...

UNUSUAL?

UNSEEN?

**SOMETHING
WEIRD
VIDEO**

HAS IT!

Send \$7.00 for our NEW DELUX video mail order catalog to
S.W.V. Dept. WOW P.O. Box 33444 Seattle Wa 98133.

*All catalog orders must be accompanied with a signature
stating that you are 18 years or older.

THE VAMPIRES

aka GOLIATH AND THE VAMPIRES

Original title: MACISTE CONTRO IL VAMPIRO

1961, Dir: Sergio Corbucci & Giacomo Gentilomo

A film review, pounded away by Jeff Segal

"That was an age to live in! An age of heroes!"

— Karl Edward Wagner, "TWO SUNS SETTING"

The television print of *MACISTE CONTRO IL VAMPIRO* aka *GOLIATH AND THE VAMPIRES* I recently screened was entitled *THE VAMPIRES*. Since this supernatural "sword and sandal" film remained distinct from childhood memory, I sought it out for a more critical analysis. I can now review *THE VAMPIRES* with a hindsight, having forced to myself countless other movies over the past ten years.

The fantasy film revival clogging the market from the mid-1970's to the early 1980's (including fare diverse as *LORD OF THE RINGS*, 1978; *EXCALIBUR*, 1981; *CONAN THE BARBARIAN*, 1982; *KRULL*, 1983) was preceded decades before by a deluge of international productions. This horde included the fondly remembered Bert I. Gordon monsterfest, *THE MAGIC SWORD* (1952), and two Ray Harryhausen breathed stop-motion animated life into - *THE SEVENTH VOYAGE OF SINBAD* (1958) and *JASON AND THE ARGONAUTS* (1963). Both films gathered enough acclaim for a mid-seventies theatrical revival, where first I experienced them. Italy, rarely less than prolific when milking a current genre trend, recycled countless legends (Greek, Roman, and other cultural tall tales) as "epicure". Atlas-physaured strongmen were recruited from around the world to topline in these period pieces. Film fans regard *ERCOLE AL CENTRO DELLA TERRA* (*HERCULES IN THE CENTER OF THE EARTH* aka *HERCULES IN THE HAUNTED WORLD*, 1961) very highly for its ease, stylized visuals. The colourful sequences certainly hoisted director Mario Bava's movie above most sweaty sword and sandal flicks. Co-directed by Sergio Corbucci (recognized by astute scholars as a master of the European Western), *THE VAMPIRES* is more of a muscular movie than its better-known rival. It mixes surrealistically colourful sequences with strong action setpieces. Through the fateful confrontations of its hero, *THE VAMPIRES* permits viewers to literally grapple with the Forces of Darkness.

Once upon a time...

Massive Goliath (Gordon Scott) is forcing an endless plow through a field. He is called away from his hemorrhoidal task to save a friend drowning in the nearby sea. The camera follows Goliath into the water, filling the screen with ocean blue. He

strongarms gangly Cheron (I depend on my ears to phonetically spell out the character's names since they didn't appear in the opening or closing credits; also, each time certain characters were addressed, their *monikers* were pronounced differently) out of the sea and the boy is quickly revived. Goliath accepts his prize in stride.

The big guy and Cheron horseback toward their village. Smoke curls ominously from the distant horizon. Goliath forces the animal into a gallop. Pirates are marauding through the village. Armored, with grotesque horned helmets, the invaders comb down people with arrow and cutlass. One guy even takes a shaft through the eye (substituting bullet for an arrow, Sergio Corbucci repeated this murder in his 1986 Eurowestern, *DIANGO*). Screaming women are dragged off. The pirate fleet sails away.

Goliath and Cheron ride through the burning canyon. Family and friends were slain and all of the surviving women, including fair-haired Julia (Cheron's older sister, Goliath's betrothed) were kidnapped! The huge man forges an iron armored lid across his chest and swears vengeance. Neighboring villages had also been attacked and their survivors directed Goliath toward the distant island of Salmenac, from whence came the pirates. A malignant intelligence was behind the atrocity.

On a pirate ship, the killers trim their overstock of women by dropping the older ones into the sea. Opportunistic sharks dine heartily, the slave master, Areal, eyes his onramp charges. He then cuts several girls, including Julia's friend Magda, across the arm and allows the blood to drip into a chalice. Areal walks into a private berth, approaching a curtained bed. Someone unseen snakes taloned fingers around the goblet and draws it in for a drink. The herula, twisted limb resembles a paw from the supernatural filmmen of Carlo Argento's *SUSPIRIA* (1976) and *INFERNO* (1980). As the thing ingests blood, a foul wind gusts the curtains.

Goliath and Cheron are next seen riding through the city streets in Salmenac. The bustling crowd parts, revealing an unfortunate man getting prodded up a pole. He slips, falling against the spikes set below.

Abdul, sultan of Salmenac, gazes out a palace window at the brutality — it is palpable evidence that he and his people are puppets to a sadistic master. Even exotic dancers, swathed in blue, cannot relax the oppression burdening Abdul. The man is consoled by Astra, a raven-haired shrew easily at home in the out-thrust world of paganism or evening soap operas. She warns the sultan to quietly accept the bloody ways of their true leader.

Later, in the sunbaked streets, an abusive slave-trader marches his whimpering wares out before the public. Astra is present, concealed within a covered *hoksha*. Goliath and Cheron recognize Magda among the slaves. The big guy fearlessly plows into the skin merchants and guardsmen; he blows them jackies through the air. In the resulting confusion, Goliath and

REVIEWS CONTINUED AFTER THE NEXT TWO PAGES...

MONSTER! SPECIAL REPORT: NASTY BLOODSUCKERS by John Vellutini

HOT DONG (sic)

Original title: MEINÜ JIANGSHI
1987, D. No English credit given

DONG OF DEATH (sic)

aka GYONSI HOLOCAUST (sic)

aka GHOUL SEX SQUAD

Original title: GANSHI YANTAN
1987, D. No English credit given

Yes, Virginia, there do exist porno-films which combine explicit sex scenes with hopping vampires. Or gyonis, as I prefer to call them. And, yes, Virginia, there is sex after death. Whoa boy, is there ever! The two films under review both lack English credits, so it's anyone's guess as to what their respective titles may be. Therefore, rather than simply call them film "x" and film "y" after a sperm's call letters, I have chosen to give these movies titles of my own creation, the first being **HOT DONG** and the second **DONG OF DEATH**. Both films appear to be of Taiwanese origin, as gyonis is pronounced "jiangshi" throughout. (**HOT FLASH!**) As this article was to go to press I just received word from the irritable Travelling Monster Hunter himself, Horacio Higuchi, that the English translations for the aforementioned films are **THE BEAUTIFUL WOMAN VAMPIRE** and **EROTIC TALES OF THE LIVING DEAD** respectively. A hearty thanks from this grateful servant!

The first film concerns itself with a Taoist priest whose loquacious nature belies his religious calling. His first victim is a young Chinese maiden who he initially drugs and places under his magic spell. He then commits various sex acts with her which further succeed in placing the woman completely under his control. Not satisfied with this conquest, the lecherous priest becomes enamored with a woman from a wealthy background. However, she treats his crude advances with contempt, arousing the Taoist to anger. That night he lays down a real hurtful spell which causes the object of his affections to be wracked with agonizing spasms of pain. Her distraught family enlists the aid of another Taoist priest, who viewing the suffering woman, immediately suspects that some foul magic is at work. An exorcism is performed which turns into a battle of wills between the two Taoists. Ultimately, the will of the exorcising priest proves stronger and the evil Taoist's spell is overcome. The following day both men meet and engage in a gun-battle, at which time the sex-crazed Taoist is once again defeated. Sluicing in his juices, in more ways than one, the vanquished priest decides to utilize the three comatose gyonis at his disposal to exact revenge. In order to achieve their resurrection these women are kidnapped and drugged. After making love to the first two women and arousing them to an orgasmic pitch, the Taoist priest then places them against their will in the coffins housing the gyonis and the lids are tightly shut to prevent their escape. Unfortunately, his bungling assistant inadvertently lifts the remaining woman and so the unsuspecting priest is forced to use his personal sex slave from above to complete this unholy trinity. In short order the gyonis revive, perhaps due to the revitalizing yin-yang of their hapless victims. (Corpses in general are beloved by Chinese to be an embodiment of their principles.) Thus fortified, the priest challenges his Taoist foe to another confrontation, with the intention of having the gyonis fight in his behalf. Unaware of the other's duplicity, his rival accepts this new challenge and both men meet the following morning outside a temple. The three gyonis are invoked and proceed to do battle with the good Taoist. Having little success in defeating his supernatural opponents, the beleaguered priest is in the process of being strangled to death when his five youthful students suddenly intervene. They, too, are no better than their master. Eventually, they combine their talents as one lighting unit and subdue two of the creatures with corpse-puncturing spells, while the third is immobilized when the youngest member of their group pisses in its face. On the demise of the third gyonis the vanquished Taoist and his assistants simultaneously expire, spewing blood and given no time to repent their evil ways. The other priest and his five students then exit the temple grounds in triumph.



This film has an 8mm feel to it and it shows. The special effects are negligible, the action scenes staged ineptly and the sex is tedious to the point of being boring. The only good thing that can be said about this movie is that it has a beginning, a middle and (mercifully) an end. Nonetheless, at the close of the film, one is left with several imperfections to consider. For instance, why is it that the benevolent priest's three oldest students sport painted facial features? One possesses red cheeks, another red lips, while the third has a red nose. Additionally, when the gyonis burst free of their coffins, there is no sign of the three women. Were their bodies consumed, subsumed to annihilated in some other manner? Inquiring minds need to know.

The second film, **DONG OF DEATH** (released in the States as **GYONSI SEX SQUAD** - editor), opens in traditional fashion with a Taoist corpse handler leading his five gyonis charges to their ultimate resting places. As evening descends, the priest begins to strip down his undead wards and discovers that one of them is female. The randy rascal then proceeds to strip down himself and make love to the gyonis girl. As the latter shows little or no feeling during her sexual ordeal, one can hardly recommend the reader add this to his list of pleasures. Aisle of bait would surely merit more emotion. The Taoist priest then resumes his journey, unaware of the fact that he and his odd entourage are now secretly being observed by someone else. Eventually, the corpse handler parks his undead charges overnight at an abandoned temple, while he goes to a nearby village to replenish his wine flask. After his departure the Peeping Wong emerges from his place of concealment and begins to taunt the immobilized gyonis, removing their corpse-puncturing spells in the process. This foolish act succeeds in enervating them and they soon make short work of their tormentor. The latter in turn becomes a gyonis and their numbers increased by one, the undead sextet proceed to seek out their victims. In due time, one of them encounters a man returning home from a clandestine meeting with his lover. The poor unfortunate is killed, eviscerated and his intestines removed for consumption. The camera lingers long and lovingly on the murderous gyonis as he scratches his victims' entrails about, almost as if he were preferring a series of somatic caresses with them. This unduly prolonged scene, albeit the height of grossness, is so strangely affecting that I for one began to crave for man chitins my ex-wife used to serve me. Oh yes, not wishing to lose their appetites, would be well advised to fast-forward through this sequence.

The viewer is then treated to an extensive sex scene in which one of the gyonis makes love to a Chinese maiden, the latter not the least bit perturbed by the fact her partner has more make-up on than she does. This has its comical moments as well, particularly when the woman begins to choke on the gyonis's beef jerky. His eyes begin to cross and his plastic set of fangs (purchased no doubt from the same toy store I used to buy mine as a child) almost pop out of his mouth. Believe me, this is one of the high points of the movie. However, balking the undead is not without its inherent dangers, even if the disks conceivably remain in a perpetual state of tumescence due to post-mortem rigor. Once the gyonis chomps, he removes his joss stick from her jade temple and... well... something weird happens. His dong now starts to suck up this smoky or vapor-like substance, as the woman moans and writhes in pain. So what? In the grand draining his victim of her sex synup, life force, yin essence, or what? I don't know, you tell me. (Sex written responses will be forwarded to the Kinsey Institute to help facilitate further research into this matter.) Anyway, Damon Poore in a review of this film which appeared in **ORIENTAL CINEMA & VIDEO** #13, seems to be at an error when he asserts this act is the woman, for when the Taoist priest discovers her body, there are large marks on her neck. Or maybe dogs, as the woman's death occurs off-screen. Perhaps gyonis prefer to sip a little blood after great sex like other smoke a cigarette.

Well, after this, everything seems anti-climatic; if you can excuse the pun. The corpse handler, having died on so-so fortune nooky of his own, returns to the temple and finds it deserted. In the meantime his wayward words have crashed a local tavern and are terrorizing the patrons. The resulting commotion attracts the Taoist's attention and he succeeds in subduing his run-amok charges

ARTICLE CONTINUED ON PAGE 14

REVIEW continued from page 7

the boy finally lies down a musty cellar. Against each wall stands what appears to be what appears to be a pasty fleshed statue of wax. Their owner, the solemn, robed Kerig, enters the room. With him is Magda. Julia is still captive. Kerig and his allies are underdog in a struggle with the dark forces persecuting Salmenaa.

From the heights of his palace, Abdul argues with Astra over the significance of the powerful stranger. A slave him self, the sultan soon admits to an elder advisor that a fear of death binds him to their enemy's whim. The elder suggests rebellion. Astra is spying on them both. As the advisor fumbles down a lonely corridor, she taps a panel. The man shouts was a trapdoor concealed beneath him opens.

By herself, Astra ignites a brazier. Red smoke boils into the room, heralding the arrival of her true master - Korbac. His translucent ka rises up, draped in robes with a demonic spiked helmet concealing its face. Aware of Goliath's presence, the megalomaniacal beast intends on using his beloved Julia as means to control the giant. ...once they find her, of course. The slave master Amalunwisely kept the blonde for himself. Goliath's massive body, Korbac hates, will serve as a model for his supernatural army of warriors. The ka finally evaporates into a blood-colored puff of smoke, leaving Astra standing alone in the blue walled room.

Goliath and Kerig plan to rescue Julia. Cheron sneaks out after them. A tool deluged from his climb up the ladder scrapes open the arm of a statue. Fluid leaks out, revealing the mannequin to be something other than wax. The conspirators wind their way past armed patrols. Around them the streets are shadowed blue under a night sky.

In the synthetic safety of the basement, Magda probes through Kerig's library. According to one author, Korbac sprang from a serpent (the original Serpent?). A tribe of warriors known only as the Blue Men harnesses the skills to stop the beast but they vanished. Suddenly, the devil himself materializes next to Magda. Her screams are silenced as Korbac claws the woman's throat.

Astra arrives in the tavern Goliath and Kerig are approaching. She locates Amal by himself with Julia and pinwheels a dagger through the burly slave-master's chest. The corpse tips over a banister, lurching into the crowd below. Astra targets Goliath and Kerig at a table and blames them. She quickly leads Julia away.

The two women beat and slash their way through the trap which the tavern has become. Goliath guards Kerig's desperate escape but is finally dragged down beneath pound on throw-riding. The guardsmen descend on their captives with fists, clubs and swordblows.

Young Cheron returns to Kerig's cellar but cannot locate Magda. Kerig greets him. Now they plan anew.

In the palace, Astra bickers with the sultan over Goliath's fate. He's given Julia as a ploy to quell rebellion against Korbac. Below them, Goliath breaks free, destroying a gladiator training room in the process. He rampages through the palace to confront the sultan. As Goliath wallops scores of sentinels, archers prepare to leather him. Abdul halts the man. Deciding it is time to exert his dwindling authority, the sultan frees both captives. Afterwards, Korbac appears. Abdul's sword-swings pass harmlessly through the beast as it throttles him to death. As with the demon featured in the Chinese film, EVIL CAT, Korbac can slay with either his physical or amorphous forms.

Astra launches a patrol after Goliath and Julia. On foot and horseback, the two crash through the guards and into the blazing desert beyond. Unfortunately, the wanderers are exposed to mounding heat and burning sandstorms. They fall through the ground into a blue cavern below the desert's surface.

Keeping them company are men from their villages, straggled against the walls too statues. A squad of blue soldiers march

..MIGHTIEST BATTLE OF THEM ALL!**MONSTER - GOLIATH**

SEE: the virgin-baron of the vampire god!

SEE: the lost island of the vampires!



GIANPAOLO CASALE - JACQUES SERRAS - GREGO BENTON

into the cavern. With them is Cheron, who rushes over to Golath. The sapphire-skinned man, he says, is allies against Korbac. Golath is suspicious until Kerig himself arrives. The conspirator is leader of the blue tribe. Since his flesh is pale, only Kerig can walk unnoticed among the citizens of Salmenac. He warns that Korbac is turning captives into soulless robots with blood; these faceless automatons will be the nucleus to an army of darkness. Efforts to revive several of the creatures through use of alchemy only half succeeded — Kerig restored each individual's features but not his consciousness. The "statues" represent this stage of transformation.

Korbac has the proper antidote, but he is hidden beneath a mountain which lay at the center of misty swampland. Kerig hesitates to go. He trots out the captured Astra and lowers the woman into a pit of huge insectoid reptiles. Golath is convinced that the pleading Astra is telling the truth. She probably does not know Korbac's exact location. The torture is halted. While resting up that night for a trip to the mountains, Golath is awakened by Astra. A one-woman man, Golath rebuffs her grateful caresses.

The following day, Golath leads the blue man through primal wilderness. Around them, scraggly trees rise out of the smothering fog. Cheron lags behind the troops.

In the blue caverns, Astra is alone under Julia's care until the captive summons Korbac. Julia almost faints (in these films, men were men, and heroines were stereotypes). The beast is aware of the enemy's movements and orders Astra to bring Julia via shortcut, to his lair before Golath arrives.

The troops brave various swamp perils on their journey. Golath and his men are unaware that behind them, materializing out of the sickly air, is an army of Korbac's slaves. The lumbering zombies have smooth skin instead of faces, and silently dog our heroes' very footsteps. Korbac suddenly appears before the patrol. His magical spray of fireballs and tumbling trees disorganizes the soldiers, routing them, straight into the waiting clutches of the slaves. The mortals are torched, crushed or beaten. Cheron is flattened by a splintered tree and Golath is clubbed into senselessness.

The biggy seeks deep inside a dank pit. Korbac gloats that he will utilize Golath's strength but not his mind. The beast will drive the giant insane with soundwaves that'll scramble Golath's brain to mush.

In his headquarters, Kerig soothes the mortally wounded Cheron, telling him that he'll scribe with Magda. The boy dies. Kerig realizes that they are all probably doomed.

However, that evening a figure stealthily approaches the pit and tosses Golath plugs of wax into his ears. Soon, a huge ball is placed above our hero. Salves beat it with clubs, bringing Golath screaming to his knees as the ongoing soundwaves hit him. He awakens again, his time on a stone slab. The zombies are preparing Golath for an operation, but he decides to perform little surgery of his own and pulps every single slave

in the room. Beloved Julia lay before him, lifeless in the first stages of transformation into a soulless plaything for Korbac. Golath channels his volcanic grief against the remaining horde of zombies, collapsing the entire lair in a cloud of rubble.

Kerig and his men are relieved after Golath strides into their cave. Boasting of victory over Korbac, the huge man grins wolfishly as he produces a vial. This formula, he says, will recall all of Korbac's slaves to life. Astra shouts at Kerig not to open the tube. Inside is a poison whose lethal fumes will slay everyone in the city. Golath whirls around and slams a spear through the woman's gut. She is a treacherous liar, the warrior declares. Another Golath barges into the cavern, this giant carrying the pitifully inert form of Julia. The muscular doppleganger warily circles one another before grappling. Their struggle shatters stones, raising a cloud of blue dust. Finally, the enraged Golath restrains his antagonist long enough to tear off its false face — revealed for all to see is the nightmare visage of Korbac, a hairless parchment of skin stretched over a stunted skull. The beast staggers away but Kerig blows it to pieces with an improvised chemical bomb. Golath has the genuine antidote and with it they revive Julia and the other victims of Korbac's devility. Appreciative Kerig is bequeathed the title of savior by the people of Salmenac and a massive idol, carved in behalf of Golath. Evil has once again been obliterated.

THE VAMPIRES is paced swiftly enough to rocket viewers past the expected B movie implausibilities. Presented by Dino De Laurentis when he still was connected to Inexpensive but entertaining films, this pulpy was packaged for international consumption. Italian strong guy hero Massimo was re-dubbed "Golath", a moniker more familiar to North American audiences. Although a period piece set in a pre-biblical, generic Middle-eastern world, **THE VAMPIRES** benefits from mingling anachronisms, these elements favor the already exotic story. The title villain relies on hi-tech concept such as soundwaves and city destroying toxin to complement his more arcane wizardry. This science includes terms such as "robot" and automation, references to Korbac's slaves. The former word, if I properly recall my speculative fiction, originated in Russia during the 20th Century (more specifically, the Russian film *R.U.R.*, 1920 - editor). Technology frequently wears its destructive head in overt fantasy. Robert E. Howard's Conan epic, "RED NAILS", involves the usage of laser-type device. Karl Edward Wagner's brooding tales of the immortal warrior Kane mate super-science with sorcery — the novels **DARKNESS WEAVES** and **BLOOD-STONE** allow malicious characters means to walk again in a world already populated with unnatural phenomena. The Kane book entitled **DARK CRUSADE** is set in a medieval style era where an other dimensional Lescorathan demon ignites a jihad. Wagner's short fiction, "LYNORTH'S REPRISAL", introduces phosphorus bombs and flesh-eating gas agents to the fantasy realm with devastating results. Needless to say, I recommend the Kane tales to all monster movie fans, if you can withstand their stylized cynicism and brutality.

The primary monster of **THE VAMPIRES** is Korbac (Guido Celino). He is reliant on military strategy as well as black magic.

Physically, the beast cuts an imposing figure. The helmet and robes cannot humanize Korbac, only add massively to his fears. The creature's face hybrids the boney mug of Nosferatu (1921 or 1979 film versions) with that of the Nazi torture-victim-turned-avenger in Antonio Margherita's atmospheric LA VERGINE DI NUREMBERG (THE VIRGIN OF NUREMBERG aka HORROR CASTLE, 1963). Korbac's continual presence throughout the peplum reflect his goals, intent on world domination via an army of totally obedient zombie soldiers, the vampiric tyrant oversees smooth running of the operation by personally gutting his piece meat or materializing whenever there is an obstruction to slay. A Pre-Christian Antichrist (religion of any sort has little influence in THE VAMPIRES), Korbac represents a deadly force in an era when magic is commonplace.

Gordon Scott as Goliath and his supporting cast deliver the colorful performances usually found in these films. Scott's highlights are the action scenes and moments of extreme rage. His dramatic battle with the doppelganger during the closing minutes of the film is an inspired bit of special effects and stagecraft. Korbac disguised as Goliath lends the character a predatory quality lacking in the 90 odd minutes which preceded the fight. Scott broadly plays Goliath as Everyman, a humble villager at home in the fields rearing automobile-sized boulders and tree stumps from the ground. He maintains this modesty throughout the war against Korbac. Co-director Corbucci's Euro-western heroes (such as DJANGO, THE MERCENARY, 1968, COMPANEROS, 1970) are edged with a world weariness and sarcasm that the giant lacks. Interestingly, Goliath and the ambitious Astra (Gloria Marie Canale) are the only two effectual above ground characters. The remaining surface dwellers are buffeted by events. For example, the people of Salernac, including their guardsmen, swap barbarism at Korbac's bidding for hero worship at the drop of a helmet. Goliath is praised by the same citizens who were after his blood not long before. The giant, Kerig and the surviving blue men serve as a catalyst for change on the island at the cost of their heads. These subterranean warriors are underdogs in the truest sense of the term.

THE VAMPIRES may please fans exhausted with over-type fantastic films that rarely deliver big budget thrills. This humble peplum crowds in enough mayhem and bizarre scenery to belate its lack of Hollywood financing. The imagery is appropriately stylized for an Italian production, with compositions of blue and red the colors of choice. A sense of conflict is initiated, as though most of the forces embodying these hues are at war. Aside from Asian movies such as A CHINESE GHOST STORY (1987), few Western fantasies of the past decade attempt to live up to the screen as enthusiastically as THE VAMPIRES.



SUBSPECIES

1991, D: Ted Nicolaou

Mighty Mites and Vampirific Frights reviewed by Steve Fontone

Despite a misleading moniker referring to diminutive demon critters that was intended to cash in on GREMLINS or maybe THE GATE, SUBSPECIES's tale mini-monsters are only tertiary within the film. It is actually more like an updated variation on NOSFERATU, by way of FRIGHT NIGHT and perhaps DARK SHADOWS.

Danish actor Anders Hove as the villainous vampire protagonist, Radu approximates the loathsomeness of Max Schreck by way of NYC gutter-pig Nick Zed. This repugnantly rodent-like monster eschews none of the usual animalistic sexual charms associated with Hollywood vampires. Radu is simply animalistic, a humanoid lamprey or man-sized leech, nine-inch crab leg fingers, lips drooling strings of disgusting sanguinary spittle, and sporting a pair of close-set sucker flaps akin to the late Reggie Nalder's rotty choppers in SALEM'S LOT. To accentuate his already consummately creepy aura, he speaks in a husky whispered rasp that might bring to mind the speech patterns of a particularly depraved obscene phone-caller. Along with the authentic Romanian locations (standing in for Transylvania), Radu's scabrous performance is what makes SUBSPECIES above-par.

Coming in a close third are David Allen's delightful red-skinned demonlings, rendered through a combination of stop-motion animation and sophisticated rod puppetry. These may be purely gratuitous to the storyline, and often badly composed with the live action (i.e., mismatched lighting), but they do help elevate the film's basic watchability level to more than tolerable. As with the skeletons spawned from the Hydra teeth in JASON AND THE ARGONAUTS and the scorpions spring from Medusa's blood in CLASH OF THE TITANS, the so-called "sub-species" sprout forth from Radu's frothy snapped-off legpups.

The involved plotline encompasses such things as the ugly willing vampire and his prettyboy, unwillingly undead brother (as the vampire "hero", GENERAL HOSPITAL scapegoat Michael Watson is actually prettier than main heroine Laura Tate!). Angus Scrimm as the ancient father, King Vladislav, looking ridiculous and self-conscious in a humorous putty white Afro wig, plus three noble female students on a Transylvanian trip who loathely trespass at longboding Castle Vladislav (as well as Ms. Tate, these three consist of American starlet Michelle McBride and Romanian starlet Irina Movila). Add to this crowded mish-mash the aforementioned shortscreener, as well as some judiciously applied gore and even a spot of basic Franco-ian topless starlet bondage (watch out for that poor nipple continuity though...). This latter element illustrates that, while much of SUBSPECIES serves for an upscale look

it is no trained from becoming too speedily mobile by its limited ten-foot-wide exploitation streak.

As with all recent Full Moon tape releases, **SUBSPECIES** comes complete with a half-hour bonus tape (pt. 3) of the company's "Video Zone" magazine featurette series. The most interesting segment of this data's the making of the film. Herein we learn that originally Romanian acrobat actors in heavy make-up were slated to portray the sub-species, but were replaced later by Allen's dimensional animation and monomeries when the "measurized humans" effect was deemed unsatisfactory by the producers. This possibly accounts for the sloppy look of some of the demon effects, which were matted directly over the top of the composited footage containing the Romanian monster performers. Actually, some of the original live-action monster footage is briefly shown here, and it doesn't really look half bad.

Another highly interesting facet of the "Video Zone" piece is when the crew conducts random "man on the street" videotape interviews with native Romanians concerning the veracity and cultural impact of vampires. Apparently, there is absolutely zero belief extant in the country with regard to the creatures. Some of the interviewees seem openly amused by the stereotyping of "superstitious Transylvanians". One sarcastically equates vampirism with the oppressive nature of Communism, while still another woman is quite openly contemptuous when she points out that the entire vampire mythology was simply created by some "stupid American". Incidentally, the "Video Zone" coverage also reveals that **SUB-SPECIES** director Tad Neeleau looks exactly like SCTV's Joe Fishery!

Though **SUBSPECIES** by no means attains the high quality of another current Full Moon release, **THE PIT AND THE PENDULUM** (the Lance Henriksen/Stuart Gordon version), it sure as hell beats out the same company's lame-as-a-roman-antic bestiality, **KISS OF THE BEAST** (aka **MERIDIAN** - hey, I like that movie! — editor). **SUBSPECIES** contains enough creative and eye-catching moments set amongst all its mediocrity to help bypass too much boredom. Muddled and schizophrenic though the production is, the film still totals 80-odd minutes worth of enjoyable monsterific hokum that should keep any longling'lan of such stuff happy. If Full Moon can continue this trend of cranking out engaging fantasy thrillers of even this unstable and half-assed caliber, the company should be one to watch in the future.

DEVILS OF DARKNESS

1965, D: Lance Comfort

British Vampire Flick Staked by Steve Fentone

For years, Planet Productions' **DEVILS OF DARKNESS** was a

lower echelon "hamburger" of mine, a film which I saw in Britain around 1975 and which then seemingly disappeared. A little while ago I was wondering whatever became of this admittedly

minor Lmy vampire flick, and wouldn't you know it, two weeks later it pops up on late-night Toronto TV! As far as I remember, **DEVILS OF DARKNESS** hasn't appeared on the Canadian box in at least fifteen years, so it was with some mild enthusiasm that I took up the Mitsubishi. Despite an on-screen "Eastmancolor" credit, the copy I saw was in plain ol' black-and-white (possibly a TV theatrical re-sale print?), but this didn't amount to more than a negligible imitation — actually, like a recent B&W theatrical screening of **MOTHRA** at Toronto's annual "B Festival", lack of color actually seemed to enhance **DEVILS OF DARKNESS'** overall mood. A preceding BBFC (British Board of Film Censors) classification card (would you believe an X rating?!) pegged the print as being of Lmy origin, which was kinda nice.

In B&W the period-set prologue assembles some Mexican vampire pic as a self-spoken narrator with pronounced Euro accent laments about one Count Armand Sinistre — notorious vampire nobleman of 15th Century France who had been buried alive for his crimes against Man and God. As subsequent "Gypsy" sequence recalls **HOUSE OF FRANKENSTEIN** as Tania (Carole Gray, from the same year's **CURSE OF THE FLY**) does as spirited dance for her husband on the night of their wedding. However, the service is interrupted by the cast shadow of a large, flapping bat that passes overhead. This startling incident causes poor Tania to up and die of fright on the spot. In a nice little touch, the giant bat hangs from a tree bough, waiting patiently as Tania's body is interred...

Count Sinistre is played by Hubert Noel (an actor who, for whatever reasons, later found himself in the abominable 1977 Canadian film, **CATHY'S CURSE**). Using a golden bat-shaped talisman, the vampire awakens slumbering Tania, taking her for his "bride". Following the ensuing credits, the action shoots ahead to 1965, making **DEVILS OF DARKNESS** the first British vampic with a modern day setting.

A group of vacillating Brit tourists come to Sinistre's neck of France. On the night of the local "All Souls Eve" celebration, one of the Englishmen goes pot-holing in some nearby caves and therein comes across Count Sinistre's open coffin and stirring undead corpse. Shortly later, the unfortunate caver is discovered dead, bearing two very familiar wounds on his throat.

Assuming the contemporized guise of "Armand du Moulaine", the Count sets his sights on an expendable secondary member of the English tourist group. The woman is understandably shaken to discover that the man casts no reflection next to hers in a moonlight garden pool. The vampire abducts her, leaving his accidentally dropped bat effigy necklace to be found by her friend, an author named Paul Baxter (William Sylvester, of **GORG0**, **DEVIL DOLL** and **THE HAND OF NIGHT**). The local police inspector proves affable enough but is ultimately uncooperative concerning the woman's disappearance, so Baxter takes to investigating the ever-deeping mystery for himself.

Items out that the entire French village is dominated by Sinistre and his savior followers, who have sworn allegiance to the Satanic symbol of the Bat and the powers of Darkness. Baxter

REVIEW continued from page 13

returns to England, where he is pursued by Siniire and Tania, who are as intent on reclaiming the missing takeman as Baxter is on keeping it from them. Baxter consults with a scientific friend of his who happens to be somewhat of an authority on the occult (this doctor is played by familiar Eddie Byrne in a brief supporting role).

Noel's suave, effete vampire Count has a sufficiently decadent air, and his scenes fading off against Sylvester's staunchly realistic writer character are loaded with underlying tension. Though story and execution are strictly formulaic and unspectacular, **DEVILS OF DARKNESS** is bolstered by some good performances and competent construction. It does often meander off through incidental and relatively uninteresting subplots, but on the whole it is better than the usual dross.

Baxter later meets up with sultry artist's model Karen (the suitably sleazy-looking Tracy Reed), who is soon targeted for vampirization by Count Siniire. But Tania, the Count's centuries-long common law "wife", grows jealous. Here the vampiric plot takes a sharp twist into more "voodoo" territory as Tania curves into a painting of Karen with a knife and it supernaturally "bleeds".

Little time is expended on the customary physical characteristics of the vampires, such as fangs, etc. (this was probably more of a monetary rather than a creative consideration), and **DEVILS OF DARKNESS** avoids potentially costly SFX outright. Instead, director Cornish (who worked on fantasy fare like **DAUGHTERS OF DARKNESS**, 1947; **THE GEM**, 1953; **THE UGLY DUCKLING**, 1958; and later in television) opts for supposed "mood" over more visceral thrills every time.

Siniire recruits a number of "Bohemian", decadent Art-Phag types (painters, post-beatniks, dancers, models, etc.) into his cause, including Baxter's friend Madeleine Braun (Diana Dicker). The climax of the film has an amassed Devil of Darkness sed striding a black magic ceremony that will initiate lissome neophyte Karen into the cult as Siniire's latest bride, much to Tania's vexation. Complications arise when it is shown that Karen bears the Mark of the Cross upon her back.... You guess the rest.

DEVILS OF DARKNESS, while slow moving and sub-Hammer, was at least a welcome sight in an otherwise dead week's TV lineup. Also watch out for another underrated '80's B+ vampire film, **THE HAND OF NIGHT**.

DONG OF DEATH continued...

in a series of confrontations. He then escorts them out of town to the relief of the village people. As the priest begins to berate the assembled gypsies for their uncivilized behavior, they suddenly, the corpse-pacifying spells on their foreheads notwithstanding, jump his Taoist ass. Freeze frame, signalling the close of yet another remarkable entry in the gypsyal creepies.

In contrast to the first film, **DONG OF DEATH** avances better production values, better special effects (albeit minimal) and, more importantly, better sex scenes. Furthermore, the movie is unintentionally funny in all the wrong places, always a sign of a good bad film. Particularly hilarious is when the gypsies invade the local tavern, as the entire sequence is shot in slow motion. It's like watching an old Mack Sennett comedy, but, in this instance, all the participants have weights attached to their legs and dials in a absurdity a similar scene in **MR. VAMPIRE 2**. The viewer is also treated to some nifty displays of "moon walking", a dance movement popularized by Michael Jackson, perhaps the most prominent member of the undead performing today (if you don't believe me, check out his most recent music video -- you can't convince me this guy's human anymore!).

Admittedly, both of these films are pretty lame, but at least **DONG OF DEATH** possesses a dumb charm all its own, while **HOT DONG** is just plain dumb. Indeed, I recommend gypsies take the world over add **DONG OF DEATH** to their video library, as it is actually far more enjoyable than some of the more standard entries in the genre. This is definitely one of those movies you want to view half-crooked.



趕屍 艷談

Cine-facts

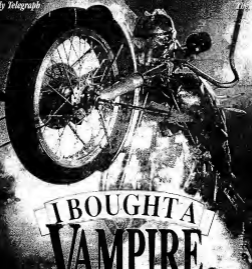
Need to have some
information on any odd or
unusual European flick?
Admits, cast & credits,
and more--Cine-facts may
have it!

Write to:
Cine-facts

23 Vanwart Drive,
Scarborough, Ontario
M1G 1G6 CANADA

"British humour at its crudest ... I loved it!"
Daily Telegraph

"Is just as silly as it sounds, but twice as funny!"
The Sun



I BOUGHT A VAMPIRE.

ON A MOTORCYCLE



© 1997 Video Search of Miami. All Rights Reserved. VHS/DVD. All Rights Reserved.
Distributed by: Video Search of Miami, Inc. (VSMI) 16111 SW 15th Ave., Suite 100, Miami, FL 33192
Phone: (305) 387-6007 Fax: (305) 387-6008
Website: www.vsmi.com

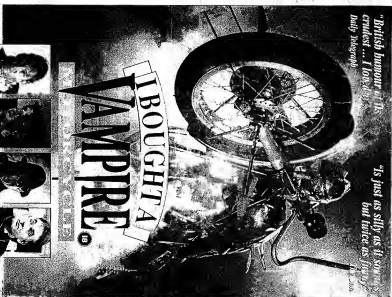


SOME OF THE FILMS IN MONSTER! ARE AVAILABLE MAIL-ORDER FROM:
VIDEO SEARCH OF MIAMI

PO BOX 16-1917, MIAMI FL 33116-1917
(305) 387-6007 WRITE OR CALL FOR INFO

"British humour at its
crudest... I loved it!"
Daily Telegraph

"Is just as silly as it sounds
but twice as funny."
The Sun



THE VIDEO FROM "I BOUGHT A VAMPIRE MOTORCYCLE" AVAILABLE
ON VHS AND DVD FROM NOVEMBER 1997

For more information on this and other films, visit our website at
www.britain.com or call 0800 20 20 20

SOME OF THE FILMS IN HONESTY ARE AVAILABLE MAIL ORDER FROM
VIDEO SEARCH OF MIAMI

PO BOX 16-1917, MIAMI FL 33116-1917
(305) 587-6007 WRITE OR CALL FOR INFO

